cheques were lodged by him for crediting to his account with Sangli Sahakari Bank Ltd. When these cheques were presented by the Sangli Sahakari Bank for payment through clearing, he fraudulently managed to remove these cheques and also carried out accounting manipulations at Kalbadevi branch. In the absence of any return memo, Sangli Sahakari Bank had credited the amount to his account which was later on withdrawn by him.

The concerned staff has been placed under suspension. An FIR has been lodged with the local police who have arrested him. According to the bank the fraud has occurred apparently owing to supervisory failure in enforcing the laid down systems and procedures.

Serious Frauds Office

2184. SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Raids kill spirit to take economic risks - CBI found inadequate, FM urged to set up serious Frauds Office" appearing in the 'Economic Times' dated November 13, 1996;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein,

(c) whether Banking and Financial market circles have also urged the Government to set up a Serious Frauds Office (SFO) or judicial cell within the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to investigate objectives of the economic offences of criminal nature; and

(d) if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d). The news items refers to inter-alia the demand for setting up of a Serious Frauds Office to investigate economic offences of a criminal nature. A proposal to set up a Sepcial Bureau of Frauds to deal with banking and financial frauds is under consideration of Government.

Weaver's Welfare Fund

2185. SHRI MUKHTAR ANIS : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the balance in the Weaver's Welfare Fund as on April 1,1995 and April 1,1996;

(b) the additions made to the fund during 1995-96; and

(c) the funds allocated through this Fund for the various welfare programmes for weavers during each of the last three years, Scheme-wise and State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (c). There is no scheme called "Weavers Welfare Fund". However; Government of India is implementing Thrift Fund Scheme, Group Insurance Scheme and Health Package Scheme for the Welfare of Handloom Weavers. Central assistance under these Welfare Schemes have increased over the year and gone up from Rs. 699.99 lakhs during 1993-94 to Rs. 987.98 lakhs during 1995-96.

Detection of F.D. Account in Rural Branch of Allahabad Bank

2186. SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the CBI has recently detected a fixed deposit account for lakhs of rupees in a rural branch of the Allahabad Bank;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the *modus operandi* adopted therein;

(c) whether any inquiry has since been conducted in regard thereto;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the outcome of the enquiry so conducted; and

(e) the action proposed to be taken to check such other bogus accounts in the private and public sector banks?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (e). Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has reported that during the course of investigation in animal hubandry department cases, it has detected certain suspected benami accounts aggregating Rs. 64,46,086/- at seven rural branches of the bank in Patna District. The accounts were opened without observing the necessary formalities like collection of specimen signatures, properly filling of account opening application forms, collection of photographs, etc. CBI's investigation has not yet been completed.

In order to ensure that such accounts are not opened, RBI have advised banks to obtain photographs of persons authorised to operate the accounts and also obtain confirmation of the addresses of the account holders independently. The inspecting officers are also required to ensure compliance with norms prescribed with opening of accounts.

Selection and Appointment in PSOs

2187. SHRI ISWAR PRASANNA HAZARIKA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) the details of policies and or rules prescribed for regulation, selection and appointment to top level posts in the public sector enterprises;

(b) whether there was any order or rule making it mandatory for Government officers to resign or retire before they could be appointed to top posts in PSOs;

(c) whether deviations have been made from the above practice in recent years; and

(d) if so, the number of cases where Government officers have been allowed to take up such assignments on deputation or lien basis?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) According to rules and regulations, selection of Chief Executives and Functional Directors in Public enterprises is made by the Public Enterprises Selection Board operating under the Deptt. Personnel and Training and the appointment is made by the concerned administrative Ministry/Department after completing various formalities. The policy of the Government is to appoint, through a fair and objective selection procedure, outstainding professional managers to top level posts in PSOs. Government has also recognised the need to develop a cadre of professional managers within the public sector. Hence, unless markedly better candidates are available from outside, internal candidates are preferred for Board level appointments. In special cases, recruitments are made from the organised services under the Central Government.

(b) to (d). Deputation of Government officers to posts in Central public enterprises is not permitted except in the case of Chief Executives and regional/zonal chiefs who require continuous liaison and coordination with State Governments and where expertise acquired in the State Government is needed for organisational efficiency. As per available information, eight Government officers have been allowed to take up board level assignments in public enterprises on deputation basis in relaxation of the general rules/ guidelines, during 1995 and 1996.

[Translation]

Investment by Australian

2188. SHRI MAHESH KUMAR M. KANODIA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Australia has offered to make investment in various fields in India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (c). During the period from 1.8.91 to 31.8.96, the Government of India has approved an Investment of Rs. 20871.6 million from Australian firms in different sectors. The top 5 sectors of Australian investment during the above period are :

	Sector	Amount (Rs. in million)	% of total amount approved for Australia
1.	Mettalurgical Industries	10539.72	49.70%
2.	Telecommunication	8005.55	37.75%
3.	Electrical Equipment	914.62	4.31%
4.	Chemical	643.49	3.03%
5.	Miscellaneous	521.05	2.46%

[English]

Health Insurance

2189. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce some health insurance and housing security scheme for the senior citizens of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the suggetions received by the Government from various sectors in that regards; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c). It has been reported by the General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC) that the General Insurance Industry already provides 3 major medical insurance policies viz. Mediclaim; Bhavishya Arogya and Jan Arogya, which even a senior citizen can purchase on payment of prescribed premium. The General Insurance Industry also provides Hut Insurance cover to families in rural areas whose income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 4800/- per annum. Under this scheme, a compensation of Rs. 1,000/- is payable if the hut gets destroyed by fire and Rs. 500/- if the belongings in the hut are destroyed. No premium is payable by the beneficiary. In addition, the General Insurance Industry also provides insurance cover against theft and burglary; loss or damage to buildings and contents by fire, lightning, explosion of gas in domestic appliances and other extraneous perils etc. under the 'Comprehensive house holders' insurance policy. Any citizen of the country; including a senior citizen can purchase these policycovers on payment of prescribed premium. The insurance companies constantly review the need for changes in the policies based on the experience gained by them and on receipt of suggestions from various quarters from time to time.